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## FRIENDSHIP IN ANCIENT POETRY.

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THE critics have been more than usually busy of late, asking the world, What is poetry? But however much interest we may find in this debate, it does not really bring us nearer to answering the question, any more than the discussions of the physiologists have enabled them to answer that other question, What is life? It is hard, indeed, to grasp the subtle essence that we call poetry, and to bind it into any set form of abstract words; but, none the less, we know poetry when we meet with it, and the best definition would neither help toward the production nor heighten the enjoyment of it. Whether poetry can truly be called a "criticism of life" seems open enough to doubt; but there can be no doubt that it is an expression of life, or of some sides of it, in language which is imaginative, musical, beautiful. And of life, those sides of it, or those sentiments springing out of it, which are the deepest and the purest and the most permanent, supply poetry with its finest material—noble sentiments, intensely conceived, adequately and musically rendered. This has given to the world its finest lyrics; and the pure lyric is poetry in its purest essence. If there be any part of life which poetry may call peculiarly its own, it is the whole range of the affections. Indeed these, it may be truly said, have no other so fitting and natural language. When any emotion has kindled to a certain heat, prose—the calm language of the judgment—is no fitting vehicle for it. The more intense the emotion, the more foolish it would look in such a garb. There are many reasons for this. Emotion is in itself rhythmical, and can only be fittingly uttered in the most rhythmical form of words. Again, it is shy and retiring, and needs something to stand between it and the rude gaze of the world. And this the very formality of meter does. It furnishes a veil to the modesty and tenderness of deep emotion. This is one great service of poetry.

It hides our feelings, while it reveals them. Many of the finest, most delicate emotions never have been, and never will be breathed except through the medium of verse. The shyest, most sensitive man will, if he has the power of song, express through it feelings and experiences that he never would have ventured to breathe into the ear of his most trusted friend.

But the poets have not merely expressed what is the emotion or affection as it really exists; they have used affection to interpret the meaning of life. They are the great assertors of "the sovereignty of feeling over knowledge," that to love, rather than to know, is the true end of life. They "measure life by love." Affection is with them the true interpretation of life. In this confused panorama called life, "ten thousand things come before us, one after another, and what are we to think of them, what color are we to give them, how are we to interpret them?" The poets, with almost one voice, answer, that affection, in some form or another, is the key by which we are to interpret the obscurities and contradictions that surround us; that it is the one good which life has to give; the one thing worth living for; the streak of blue sky here and there illumining what else would be but a dark or dismal horizon. Many poets stop there; with them, when affection has been once for a moment attained, they feel that

"Their soul hath her content so absolute,  
That not another comfort, like to this,  
Succeeds in unknown fate."

But other wiser poets make us feel, even while they best portray affection, that earth is not made for its full fruition; that the inborn, ineradicable desire and capability to love and be loved is here to be trained, disciplined, not rested in as final enjoyment; that enough is given to be a solace and to kindle hope, not enough to rest in as the ultimate good. The poets who do this are exercising their highest office; they make us feel "the infinite in things" when they show that the purest human affection has kinship with what is heavenly and eternal, which it foreshadows, which it rests on, for which it is a preparation.

The forms in which this interpretation of human affection have been set forth in poetry are manifold. In tragedy we see the divine spark struggling with the thwarting elements of life—the sordid, the selfish, and the base. Desdemona's

love, to be wrought out and perfected, requires the presence of a Cassio and an Iago. But it is not of this form of affection — the passionate love of man and woman — that I am now to speak. That would be ground too delicate to venture on ; besides that, it would crowd upon our view more than the half of all extant poetry. It is rather that more temperate but not less real form of affection which we call “friendship,” that will now engage us. It will be enough if I can succeed in recalling a few of the most rememberable examples of this, as these appear in the ancient poets, that is, the poets of pre-Christian ages. These are, indeed, the lights that more than anything else illuminate and relieve the troubled background of human history.

At the name of friendship, one supreme instance, I suppose, rises up before every one, the earliest and the most known in the records of the past. I need hardly name David and Jonathan, yet I cannot pass them by, for theirs is, and will remain, the typical friendship of the world. Have you ever considered that characteristic of the Hebrew people, that as they attained to a purer, nearer, more intimate thought of God than any other race, so there is in their human affections a home-heartedness, a depth and intensity, elsewhere unapproached. Perhaps these two characteristics have a common ground. Think of the story of Joseph and his brethren, the idyll of Ruth, and many a word scattered through psalmist, prophet, and historian of the Old Testament, and you will understand what I mean.

But, pathetic as the others are, the finest type, the highest ideal, of true friendship will always be that which began when that shepherd boy, who was “ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to,” was brought from the sheepecotes of Bethlehem into the palace of the king, and the king’s son looked upon the shepherd lad, and “it came to pass that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and he loved him as his own soul.” Then that last meeting, when David “arose out of his place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times ; and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, till David exceeded, and Jonathan said to David, ‘Go in peace. . . . The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.’ And David arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city,” and they met no more. And when Saul and Jonathan fell down slain in Mount Gilboa, what an elegy was

that which David wailed over them. The best that Greece and Rome have to show of friendship looks pale beside this. After David had sung that strain, no such second affection was ever granted him. In his life, so full of startling vicissitude, the opening scene stands alone for its brightness and attractiveness:

“Double praise thou shalt attain,  
In royal court and battle-plain;  
Then come heart-ache, care, distress,  
Blighted hope, and loneliness;  
Wounds from friend and gifts from foe,  
Dizzied faith, and guilt, and woe;  
Loftiest aims by earth defiled,  
Gleams of wisdom sin-beguiled,  
Sated power’s tyrannic mood,  
Counsels shared with men of blood;  
Sad success, parental tears,  
And a dreary weight of years.  
Strange that guileless face and form  
To lavish on the scarring storm!”

When we turn to the Greeks, it is in their philosophers more than in their poets that we see how great a power in their life was friendship, how large and preëminent was the place that it held. Why was this? I shall here condense the answer that the German scholar Curtius gives to this question. “In every age,” he says, “the native selfishness of man has been the great power against which moralists, philosophers, and teachers have had to contend.” What shall counterwork, subdue, change this evil principle? Law and self-control may restrain it outwardly, but cannot eradicate or dispossess it from within. What then could do it? Nothing but the inspiration of a new affection. Greek religion could not supply this, for it exhausted itself in external performances, and could not create affection. It knew nothing of the love of God to man, and therefore could not awake in man an inward love to God. Domestic love could not do it, for marriage was rather a duty which a man as citizen owed to the state than an affair of the heart. Except in rare instances, woman was too subordinate, too inferior, to be a help-mate or a friend of man. Exceptions there may have been, as we may gather from Homer’s conception of Andromache:

“Father to me thou art, and mother dear,  
And brother too, kind husband of my heart.”

But such cases were too rare to be taken into account. Finding the motive power that man needed neither in religion nor in the domestic ties, as these existed in Greece, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle turned to friendship in its largest sense—affinity of soul, mutual sympathy between man and man, and found in it the elevating force they longed for, the prime motive power of moral life. They saw in it the germ of whatever is divine in the heart of man, the spark that, if fostered and fed, transfigured his whole being. When guided by self-control to the highest good, and strengthened by communion with souls equally attuned, it lifted a man above everything sordid, and made him aspire toward heavenly virtues.

Affection of this kind was the highest moral power known to the Greeks, the central purifying fire in Greek ethics. It was the pillar of national life, a sacred institution which had mythic founders and venerable examples. It was to the Greeks not only an enjoyment, a pleasant ornament of life, it was a necessity for all higher souls, an essential element in their daily life, the antidote to selfishness and narrow-mindedness. It was the touchstone of Hellenic virtue while their greatness lasted. Alexander the Great felt this, and when he went forth to the East, to make Hellenic civilization the common possession of the world, he desired to renew in his own friendship with Hephæstion the pattern that heroic times had bequeathed in Achilles and Patroclus. Friendship so conceived, the most thoughtful of the Greeks regarded, not as a mere impulse, but as a divine inspiration, not to be rationalized or accounted for, either by like taking to like, or by the unlike fitting into each other. It was the real soul of ancient life, shedding a grace and a bloom over its clear-cut outlines. It supplied at once that tender devotion which religion has engendered, and that imaginative romance with which Christianity and chivalry have combined to invest womanhood.

In three of Plato's Decalogues—the *Lysis*, the *Symposium*, and the *Phædrus*—there are fine thoughts and sayings about human affection; but these struggle through such a cloud of parable, myth, and irony, that they are hard to grasp. You know not whether it is the personal affection of friend for friend that he is speaking of, or a passion of the reason, a kind of mystical contemplation of the beautiful and the good. This much, however, he seems to mean: that man cannot live in

isolation; that he needs a reconciler for his poor, distracted nature; that the reconciler is love, which is "a kind of divine madness"; and that the best love of this world is a hint and a prophecy of an ideal union not yet realized. But there are some things which make it difficult to dwell on Plato's views on these subjects.

There are, however, no such hindrances to the full understanding and enjoyment of Aristotle's two famous books on friendship, in his "Ethics." Over these two books how many who have cared little for the technical and dry discussions of the previous books have lingered delightedly. They found so much in them that appealed directly to their own experience. In these two books the great analytic philosopher, while he lays down what has been called the physiology and the pathology of human affection with his own inevitable good sense and directness, has yet done it with such warmth, there is such an underglow in his words, that one is quite sure he is speaking of what he has himself felt and seen. We see in these books the truth of that saying of the Oxford professor of Greek, that "under the marble exterior of Greek literature there is concealed a soul thrilling with emotion." How striking is that opening remark of Aristotle, which is the key-note of his whole treatise, that without friendship no one would choose to live, though he had all other goods which the world could offer; that friendship is a necessity of life. And here let it be said, once for all, that while we must use the word friendship,—for we have no other,—Aristotle means by his *φιλία* something much wider; he means that oneness of soul, that genuine heart-sympathy, which is necessary to all the finest forms of human relationship, whether that relationship is between members of the same family, or persons beyond the household but united by ties of blood, or those who have no other kinship than that of the heart. With what clear, decisive insight he discriminates between the different forms of so-called friendship, by pointing to the three great objects of human desire—the good, the pleasant, and the useful—and making these the test of the nature of the friendship. Friendships, so called, that are founded on utility, the desire for mutual advantage, are, he says, no true friendships, but disappear as soon as one friend can be no longer useful to the other. These forms of friendship belong only to mercenary persons. Their friendships, formed

on the desire for mutual pleasure, change as pleasures change. Such are often the friendships of children, who are quick to form and quick to drop them. Real friendship, he tells us, has for its object of desire the highest good of the person loved, and is founded on the earnest desire of this for your friend as well as for yourself. When two friends desire each the highest good of the other, and desire it only for the friend's sake, with no thought for themselves or their own advantage, this is the only stable, complete, and perfect friendship. To such friendships pleasure and advantage are sure to be added; but they come unsought, and are not that which is aimed at. Friendships of this kind are rare, and take time to grow. A friend of this kind loves his friend for his own sake; each has perfect faith in the other, cannot conceive that one would wrong the other under any circumstances. Some friends, Aristotle goes on to say, live together, see each other every day, and are continually doing mutual kind offices. Other friends are absent from each other; would do kind offices if they could, but are hindered by the separation. Yet absence does not sever friendship, only impedes the outward manifestation of it.

It is not possible to have this perfect friendship with many, for such friendship is a hyperbole, a sort of excess of feeling, a throwing away of all limits, a giving up, an abandonment of the whole self. Such friendship requires the two friends to have much experience of each other and close intimacy, which are hard to obtain. One is almost startled to find the cool Greek philosopher using language like this.

Aristotle also discusses what he calls friendships of inequality, as between older and younger persons, between father and son, between persons of different ranks, and lays down with perfect justice the conditions of such friendship. On the whole, he concludes that the essence of friendship consists rather in loving than in being loved, in giving rather than in receiving affection. Yet most persons, he says, prefer to be loved rather than to love, because to be loved, he cynically adds, flatters their vanity. This active spirit of love is at once the essence and the virtue of friendship; and when two persons have this, they are perfect friends.

On the causes that make men need, desire, and delight in friends, Aristotle has some keen-sighted thoughts. More than once he calls a friend our second self, just as Pythagoras had



defined a friend the half of one's soul, and as the Greek proverb has said, "Friendship is one soul in two bodies." If this is so, a man can hardly be deemed happy who is doomed to be solitary, or to live only with strangers or chance people. In such circumstances a man's heart is pent up, confined; and this is not only a pain, but an actual lowering of life within him. But the presence and intercourse of friends enlarges and expands our sense of existence, and quickens that vivid energy and glow of mind which is the highest happiness. The quick consciousness we have of a friend's existence, by means of intercourse with him, is an enlargement of our own consciousness, of the sense of our own existence. Thus the love of friendship arises out of the love of life, and is indeed another form of it. As a man feels toward himself, so he feels toward his friend; and as the consciousness of his own existence is to each man a choice-worthy thing, so is the consciousness of the existence of his friend.

The intercourse with friends gives vividness to the pursuits of life, and intercourse with the good strengthens and increases the good that is in each man. The same thought is expressed by a great writer of our own time, in a more subdued and pensive tone :

"We gain much for a time by fellowship with each other. It is a relief to us, as fresh air to the fainting, or meat and drink to the hungry, or a flood of tears to the heavy in mind. It is a soothing comfort to have those whom we may make our confidants; a comfort to have those to whom we may confess our faults; a comfort to have those to whom we may look for sympathy. Love of home, and family, and friends, in these and other ways, is sufficient to make this life tolerable to the multitude of men, which otherwise it would not be. But," he adds characteristically, and in another vein from Aristotle, — "but still, after all, our affections exceed such exercise of them, and demand what is more stable."

Modern literature has nothing to show that for breadth of view and intensity of feeling can compare with Aristotle's treatise on Friendship, or even with Cicero's Dialogue *De Amicitia*. It has been remarked how pale and cold beside this is Bacon's essay on Friendship. The earliest legends of Greece abound with noble companionships. Theseus and Piritheus, Pylades and Orestes, Damon and Pythias, were to them, and have ever since been, famous and familiar as household words. And yet this affection has not embodied itself in Greek poetry so frequently as might have been expected.

The most famous example in the poetry of the Greeks is that in which the whole story of the *Iliad* culminates. The friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, begun in childhood in the halls of Peleus, maintained through manhood and proven in battle under the walls of Troy, is only fully realized when Patroclus falls. I need not dwell on the well-known incidents. The Achæans are driven in disorder to their ships; Patroclus beseeches Achilles to allow him to go with the myrmidons to their aid; three times he assails the walls of Troy in vain, and in the fourth assault falls beneath the arm of Hector. Archilochus bears the tidings to Achilles in his tent in these words. I quote from the excellent translation of the *Iliad* by my friend Mr. Cordery:

“Woe’s me, great son of Peleus,—very sad  
The news I bear thee, would it had not been!  
Fallen lies Patroclus, round his naked corse  
They battle now; and Hector hath the arms.  
He spake, and a black cloud of grief enwrapped  
The other, who in either palm upheaved  
Ashes, and showered them o’er his head, and fouled  
His comely face, and the dark embers clung  
About his fragrant robe. And down he threw  
Himself, outstretching all his length on earth,  
And tearing with his hands defiled his hair.”

Then follows the interview with his mother, Thetis, her obtaining armor from Hephaistus for her son, the cleansing of the dead body of Patroclus, and the swathing it in fine linen, and laying it out ready for the funeral pyre. Then Achilles goes forth to wreak vengeance on the Trojans for the death of his friend, lays hands on twelve fairest youths of Troy, to make of them an offering at the tomb of Patroclus, meets with Hector and vanquishes him, exults over him savagely, and savagely drops the corse at his chariot-wheels, in sight of all the city. In pathetic contrast with the ferocity of vengeful Achilles is the tenderness with which Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache wait for their fallen one.

That night, when Achilles had retired to sleep beside the sounding sea, the spirit of Patroclus prevailed in the strength of friendship to burst the barriers of Hades, and stood by his sleeping friend:

"Sleep'st thou, Achilles, and art thus of me  
 Forgetful? Whom in life thou ne'er didst fail  
 Him now thou fail'st in death. But hear my prayer:  
 Bury me now with speed, that I may pass  
 The gates of Hades, where the other shades,  
 The ghosts and phantoms of the feeble dead,  
 Repel me still, nor suffer me to join  
 Their shadowy throng beyond the ocean-stream;  
 So through death's open hall I flit forlorn.  
 Give me thy hand, I pray thee, and farewell,  
 A last farewell; for when ye have bestowed  
 My pyre, I may not come from Hades more.

. . . . .  
 But let one urn now hold thy bones and mine,  
 The golden urn thy heavenly mother gave."

To whom the fleet Achilles made reply:

"What need, mine own beloved, thus to come  
 And charge me, word by word? Fear not; whate'er  
 Thou biddest, to the utmost I fulfill.  
 But near, more near! Come, let us cast our arms  
 Around each other for a while once more,  
 And satisfy our souls with wail and woe."

Then follows the burning of the body on the funeral pyre, with all the savage rites — the slaughtered sheep and oxen, the jars of honey and wine, the nine steeds, two favorite dogs, and above all, those twelve fair sons of Troy, slaughtered and consumed in the funeral fire; and then the trailing of Hector's body again and again round the cavin piled over the dust of Patroclus. But amid these ferocities, still there is one tender touch. Achilles cuts off the best locks of his own hair, and places them in the hand of the dead Patroclus, as he lies ready to be consumed. So true is it, as Professor Campbell well says, that in these old heroic times "savage vindictiveness and the most tender affectionateness are found side by side both in heroes and heroines alike, and produce some of the most moving contrasts. But the tenderness is not less deep and real for the co-existence with it of untamed ferocity."

To pass now to Pindar. In the tenth Nemean Ode, he in this wise tells the story of Castor and Polydeuces, and of their love, faithful even unto death. They two,

"Now changing climes alternately, dwell one day with their father Zeus, and the next in the secret places under the earth, within the valleys of

Therapuai, fulfilling equal fate; because in this wise chose Polydeuces to live his life, rather than to be altogether god, and to abide continually in heaven, when that Castor had fallen in the fight."

Then Pindar describes the combat, and how Polydeuces slew the two brothers who had been the slayers of Castor:

"Then quickly came back the son of Tyndareus to his great brother, and found him not quite dead, but the death-gasp rattled in his throat. Then Polydeuces wept hot tears and groaned, and lifted up his voice, and cried, 'Father Zeus, ah! what shall make an end of woes? Bid me also, O King, to die with him. The glory is departed from a man bereaved of friend. Few are they who, in the day of trouble, are faithful in companionship of toil.' Thus said he, and Zeus came and stood before his face, and spake these words: 'Thou art my son; but thy brother was sprung from a mortal sire. But, nevertheless, behold, I give thee choice of these two lots: if, shunning death and hateful old age, thou desirest for thyself to dwell in Olympus with Athene and with Ceres of the shadowing spear, this lot is thine to take; but if in thy brother's cause thou art so fervent, and art resolved in all to have equal share with him, then half the time thou shalt be alive beneath the earth, and half in the golden house of heaven.' Thus spake his father, nor did Polydeuces doubt which counsel he should choose. So Zeus unsealed the eye, and presently the tongue also, of Castor of the brazen mail."

The tragedians contain no representation of friendship to compare with the Homeric Patroclus. But there is something of it in a play of Sophocles, and might have been more. In his "*Electra*" the two friends, Orestes and Pylades, return to Argos, after years of absence, to avenge the death of Agamemnon; but Pylades is a silent personage, and nothing is made of his friendship with Orestes. Orestes and *Electra*, however, are there represented, as they were in sculpture, in the attitude of friendship rather than as brother and sister.

But the opportunity that Sophocles had missed of depicting a famous friendship, Euripides seized and turned to good account in his "*Iphigenia in Tauris*." The scene of the drama is laid in the Tauric Chersonese, and the spot has been identified with the now historic Balaclava. There of old stood a temple of Artemis, and there human sacrifices were offered on her altar. To this remote and savage region Iphigenia, rescued by Artemis from the murderous hands of her father at Aulis, had been miraculously conveyed through the air, and appointed by the goddess to be the priestess of her horrid rites. One night Iphigenia has a dream that convinces her that her brother Orestes

is dead, and she comes forth with a retinue to carry funeral libations, and to pour forth a wail to him, as to a spirit in Hades. At this moment news is brought to Iphigenia that two strangers from Greece have landed on the coast, have been captured, and will straightway be brought to the temple, that she may sacrifice them at the altar of Artemis. The captives appear before Iphigenia in chains, and then ensues a scene full of dramatic interest. Iphigenia asks, "Are ye two brothers of one mother born?" And Orestes answers, "Brothers we are in love though not in blood." Finding them to be Greeks, Iphigenia elicits from them the whole story of the fall of Troy, the return of Menelaus and Helen, the murder of her father Agamemnon, and the vengeance taken on Clytemnestra by her son Orestes, who is still alive. The thought occurs to Iphigenia that she may employ one of these strangers to bear a letter to Orestes at Argos, to acquaint him with her situation. Then follows a contest between the two friends, each desiring to resign himself to death that the other may be spared. Orestes strongly urges Pylades to accept the office of messenger, on the ground that he (Pylades) had already married Electra, sister of Orestes, and would maintain the lineage and honor of the house; while he (Orestes), outworn with misery and hunted by the Furies, had nothing to live for and had better die. Pylades objects:

"'Twere base that I should live, and thou shouldst die;  
Thy comrade as I sailed, so, if need be,  
Thy comrade I shall die; for I should win  
A coward's name in Argos, well deserved,  
And in the land of Phocis many-delled.  
For many, with their evil thoughts, will deem  
That I betrayed thee for my own escape,  
Or even have slain thee, when thy house was weak,  
To gain thy kingdom for myself, and dower  
My wife, thy sister, with thy royal wealth.  
These things I dread, and hold in shame and scorn;  
Therefore with thee I needs must breathe my last,  
With thee be slain, my body burnt with thine,  
A blameless friend, and faithful to the end."

Orestes replies that it is good for him to die, but not for Pylades, for

"Happy art thou and hast a happy home;  
Mine is abhorred, impious, unblest.

. . . . .

Then fare thee well, for I have found thee ever  
 The dearest of my friends, thou who hast been  
 My fellow-huntsman and my constant mate,  
 Bearing with me the burden of my woes."

Pylades, at length prevailed on, receives from Iphigenia first the letter, and then its contents verbally, in case he should be shipwrecked and lose the letter. As she communicates the contents she discovers that it is Orestes himself who stands before her, and whom she is on the point of sacrificing. Then an escape is planned between the three, which, after many chances and vicissitudes, is at last safely accomplished by the intervention of Athene, who often for Euripides intervenes at the critical moment. Only a small part of the touching scene is here given, but it is enough to show that Euripides, like Pindar, felt that "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend."

Had not the lyric poetry of Greece—all, save part of Pindar's—perished, there would, no doubt, have come down to us frequent memorials of the love of friends. In the later idyllic poetry there is a well-known lament, that of Moschus for the untimely death of his brother-poet, Bion, who flourished about 280 B. C. It is one of the earliest instances of a strain that has been often since repeated, wherein nature is called upon to join in sorrow for one of the sweetest of her sons:

Ye nightingales that lament among the thick leaves of the trees,  
 Tell ye to the Sicilian waters of Arethusa  
 The tidings that Bion the herdsman is dead, and that with him  
 Song too has died, and perished hath the Dorian minstrelsy.  
 Begin, ye Sicilian muses, begin the wail.

Every famous city laments thee, Bion.  
 Ascrea laments thee far more than her Hesiod,  
 And Pindar is less regretted by the forests of Bœotia.  
 Not so much did pleasant Lesbos mourn for Alcæus,  
 Nor did the Teian town so much bewail her poet;  
 While for thee more than for Archilochus doth Paros yearn,  
 And not for Sappho, but for thee, doth Mytilene wail her musical lament.  
 Begin, ye Sicilian muses, begin the wail.

Ah me, when the mallous wither in the garden,  
 And the green parsley, and the curlèd tendrils of the anise,  
 Another day they live again, and grow in another year;

But we men, we, the great, and mighty, or wise,  
When once we have died, gone down to silence, in the hollow earth,  
We sleep a very long and endless and unawakening sleep.

So we see what has been the experience of men in every time; that only when friends are removed forever from our sight, do we fully appreciate what they were, and what they have been to us.

When the light of literature first dawns upon Rome, we find friendship as highly esteemed by her sons as ever it was among the Greeks. Those we speak of are, of course, the Romans of the last century of the Republic, whose minds were steeped in the literature of Greece, and their sentiments molded by Hellenic influence. What part friendship played in the pre-Hellenic ages of Rome, before Greece had changed the stern old Roman character, it is not easy to say. But how deeply the habit of friendship had imbued the Roman mind by the time of Cicero, and even before it, is well illustrated both by his writings and his life. His beautiful treatise, *De Amicitia*, has no parallel in our literature. In it he depicts the friendship that existed, a century before the time when he wrote, between Lælius and Scipio Africanus the younger, the destroyer of Carthage, B. C. 147, and of Numantia, B. C. 133. At the close of that treatise Lælius, who was chief spokesman, says: "For my part, of all the advantages that either nature or fortune has bestowed upon me, there is none that can compare with that of having had Scipio for my friend." It may be noted, as a proof how far literature and cultivation had subdued the old Roman prejudices, that into the society of Scipio and Lælius, Tereus, born an African slave, was admitted on equal terms as the companion and friend of these two nobles. As for Cicero, his sentiments in the *De Amicitia* are not merely fine sayings, they are the transcript of his own experience. Statesmen, like kings, are often without a friend; but there is nothing in the lives of modern politicians like the firm and lasting friendship of Cicero and Atticus. Well may Mr. Forsyth, in his "Life of Cicero," remark: "In the whole history of literature I know no case where friend has communicated with friend for a long series of years, nay, for a whole life-time, on terms of such absolute confidence as these two distinguished men."

There was another historic friendship of the same age, not less close and intimate, though no written records of it remain.

But the intimacy of Brutus and Cassius was described by Plutarch, and Shakspeare, with his usual insight into the social life of the time, has vividly reproduced it in his "Julius Cæsar." The strength and nobility of Brutus's friendship for Cassius is shown by the way in which what was well-nigh a deadly quarrel is turned to beautiful reconciliation.

There is a poet, a contemporary and friend of Cicero, who felt warmly and expressed most spontaneously and naturally what he felt toward his friends. In the gay and careless Catullus, one of the chief charms was the truth and warmth of his affections. "Many poets have sung the praises of love; few, if any, have left so pleasant a record of their intercourse with their friends. Whether in his gayest hours, or his deepest sorrow, it was to these he turned for sympathy. He felt for them in their griefs and disappointments, and rejoiced with them in their joy. He appreciated their successes in literature without a shade of envy, as in his dedication of his poems to Cornelius Nepos, the historian, and in the light-hearted congratulations he addressed to Cicero on the renown of his oratory." Of the hearty and natural way in which he felt toward his friends, his lines to Verranius, on his return from long absence in Spain, is a good example. I give it in the translation of Sir Theodore Martin:

"Dearest of all, Verranius! O my friend!  
Hast thou come back from thy long pilgrimage,  
With brothers twin in soul thy days to spend,  
And by thy hearth-fire cheer thy mother's age?"

"And art thou truly come? O welcome news!  
And I shall see thee safe, and hear once more  
The tales of Spain, its tribes, its feats, its views,  
Flow as of old from thy exhaustless store.

"And I shall gaze into thine eyes again!  
And I again shall fold thee to my breast!  
O you, who deem yourselves most blest of men,  
Which of you all like unto me is blest?"

If the warmth of Catullus's heart is seen in such outbursts as these, it appears not less in the bitterness with which he felt any unkindness or estrangement; and ancient poetry has no more natural and heart-felt elegy than his lament over the untimely death of his brother Hortalus, toward whom he felt not only as a brother, but as a bosom friend.



When we come to the succeeding and more highly wrought age of Roman poetry, Virgil we find very reserved in expressing his own personal feelings. In fact, it is only indirectly that he refers to himself or his friends at all. In the tenth eclogue, however, when he sings of his early companion and fellow-student, Gallus, and the love of Gallus for Lycōsis, under the usual pastoral and Arcadian guise that seems to us so artificial, there are two lines in which Virgil's own native feeling reveals itself:

“Gallus,  
For whom my love grows every hour as fast  
As the young alder grows in early spring.”

In the *Æneid* there are several persons and situations that might be dwelt on. If “Fidus Achates” is too colorless a personage, or if Pallas and Lausus are too faintly limned to detain us, the story of Nisus and Euryalus, the delight of every boyhood, stands the test of aged criticism, so attractive is the conjunction of the prowess of mature manhood and the first fresh bloom of the warrior-boy.

“Nisus was guardian of the gate,  
No bolder heart in war's debate.

. . . . .  
With him, Euryalus, fair boy;  
None fairer donned the arms of Troy;  
His tender cheek as yet unshorn,  
And blossoming with youth new-born.  
Love made them one in every thought;  
In battle side by side they fought;  
And now in duty at the gate  
The twain in common station wait.”

When the hour of trial comes, forth they go, brothers in arms as in affection, the manly warrior and the gallant boy, one in the beauty of their companionship and in the pathos of their fall.

As to Nisus:

“In vain he spake; the sword, fierce driven,  
That alabaster breast had riven;  
Down falls Euryalus, and lies  
In death's enthralling agonies;  
Blood trickled o'er his limbs of snow;  
His head sinks gradually low.  
Thus severed by the ruthless plough,  
Dim fades a purple flower;  
Their weary necks no poppies bow  
Beneath the thunder shower.”

"Then Nisus on the midmost flies,  
With Volsceus, Volsceus, in his eyes,"

"Then, pierced to death, asleep he fell  
On the dead breast he loved so well.  
Blest pair! if aught my verse avail,  
No day shall make your memory fail  
From off the heart of time,  
While Capitol abides in place,  
The mansion of the Æneian race,  
And throned upon that moveless base  
Rome's father sits sublime."

If Virgil does not often enlarge on friendship himself, he seems to have awakened very lively feelings of friendship in others. Horace is never more gentle, he even becomes tender, whenever he speaks of him. The very mention of Virgil seems to call out in Horace his best sense of purity and unworldliness. When Virgil accompanied him on the celebrated journey to Branduscium, this is the way he speaks of him:

"At Sinuessæ we with Plotius meet  
Varius and Virgil; men than whom on earth  
I know none dearer, none of whiter soul."

While Virgil was as yet known only as the writer of the *Eclogues*, Horace says of him:

"The muse that loves the woodland and the farm,  
To Virgil lends her gayest, tenderest charm."

Again, when Virgil was about to sail for Attica, some say in search of health, Horace addressed in a well-known ode the ship that was to bear him thither:

"To thee, O ship, we commit Virgil. Deliver him safe on the shores of Attica, and preserve him whom I love as my life; and may the skies and winds prosper thee."

He calls Virgil the half of his soul, or, as the late Professor Conington rendered the passage:

"So do thou, fair ship, that ow'st  
Virgil thy precious freight; to Attic coast  
Safe restore thy loan and whole,  
And give me back the partner of my soul!"

Horace has one more mention of Virgil, which cannot be omitted. In his ode lamenting the death of their common friend Quintilius, he says:

"And sleeps he, then, the heavy sleep of death,  
 Quintilius? — Piety, twin-sister dear  
 Of Justice! naked Truth! unsullied Faith!  
 When will ye find his peer?  
 By many a good man wept; Quintilius dies;  
 By none than you, my Virgil, trulier wept."

This tone of tenderness toward Virgil is the more remarkable because Horace was, if not peculiarly a worldly man, yet every way a man of the world. He delighted in what is called "good society," liked to be familiar with the great, and speaks and writes in the most familiar terms about all the most distinguished men of his time—the old aristocracy; the statesmen, like Mecenas and Agrippa; the poets Varius, Virgil, Pollio, and Tibullus. Besides these, he has friendliness to spare for obscurer men; but his friendships, though genuine, are never absorbing; there is in them nothing of that hyperbole which Aristotle speaks of. He is always self-contained, and never becomes so attached to one friend as Cicero was to Atticus. It was friendship within measure, according to the rules of common sense, never reaching to ardor or devotion.

Many more of the odes are dedicated to his several friends, and it is noticeable how the tone varies with the disposition of each one who is addressed. Thus, he invites Septimius to be his companion when he would retire to live among the happy hills that surround Tarentum, with their honey, their olives, their grapes, their mild winters and long springs. "On that spot," he says, "we will live together, and there thou wilt lay my bones and drop over them the tear of affection."

In the next ode he addresses his friend Pompeius, who had been his comrade alike in battle and in banqueting:

"O oft with me in troublous time  
 Involved, when Brutus warred in Greece,  
 Who gives you back to your own clime,  
 And your own gods, a man of peace,  
 Pompey! the earliest friend I knew,  
 With whom I oft cut short the hours  
 With wine, my hair bright bathed in dew  
 Of Syrian oils, and wreathed with flowers?  
 With you I shared Philippi's rout,  
 Unseemly parted from my shield,  
 When Valor fell, and warriors stout  
 Were tumbled in the inglorious field."

But, however warm may have been the affection that the poets cherished toward their friends, however beautiful their expression of it, we find in them no hint of any hope that the intercourse so prized here may be renewed hereafter. Often, indeed, there is the distinct confession, when death comes, that the separation is forever. Such we saw was the refrain of the lament for Bion; such, too, was the feeling that Catullus expressed in his elegy for his brother. I can recall but one passage in Roman literature where, in bidding farewell to a departed soul, the mourner hints any hope for the future. It is the well-known passage with which Tacitus concludes his life of Agricola, a passage which, though in prose, breathes all the elevated thought and beautiful melody of high poetry: "If there is a home for the shades of the good, if, as wise men believe, great souls do not perish with the body, mayest thou rest in peace!" But even if no hope for the future was vouchsafed to those men of old time, yet if they really esteemed true and pure friendship to be the best thing that this world had to offer them, and gave their hearts faithfully and unselfishly to their friends, shall we not think that they chose the better part, and were by that choice prepared for whatever may yet be in store for the affectionate and the true?

J. C. SHAIRP.